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Summary record of the 18th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 11 November 1998, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Macedo ..... (Mexico)
later: Mr. Chun Hae-jin ..... (Republic of Korea)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 83: United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (*continued*) (A/53/13, A/53/471, A/53/472, A/53/518 and Corr.1, A/53/551, A/53/569 and A/53/644; A/C.4/53/L.9 and L.10)

1. **Mr. Dausá Céspedes** (Cuba) said that his delegation wished to express its appreciation to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) for its important work of assisting Palestinian refugees. His Government considered that the lack of a definitive solution to the refugee problem necessitated the supervision provided by UNRWA, which functioned as a safety net for a vulnerable population and an element of stability in a turbulent region.

2. The report of the Commissioner-General of UNRWA for the period 1 July 1997–30 June 1998 (A/53/13) showed the difficult conditions under which UNRWA must work, especially in view of its inadequate funding. In that regard, he thanked all those who had supported and made contributions to UNRWA. He also echoed the UNRWA appeal for additional contributions and funding to enable it to meet the major challenges which it faced in the areas of relief, health, education and employment promotion for refugees. He urged the wealthier countries which had given their political support to the peace process and to the goal of achieving a solution to the Palestinian problem to respond to the UNRWA appeal and called on other countries to join him in expressing their solidarity with the needy Palestinian people. His Government, for its part, remained politically committed to UNRWA activities and, despite its major economic and financial limitations, would continue its endeavours to ensure that young Palestinians could study in Cuba and receive professional training in health and other fields so that, in the future, they could work on behalf of their people.

3. **Mr. Duval** (Canada) said that his delegation welcomed the Wye River Memorandum, which marked a new step on the path towards peace and reconciliation between Israel and its Arab neighbours. However, the ultimate goal was the achievement of a just, comprehensive and lasting peace which would guarantee security, stability and prosperity for all people in the region. He therefore urged the parties to increase their efforts to negotiate a comprehensive peace in accordance with the principle of land for peace and the provisions of Security Council resolution 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967.

4. Canada had a long tradition of support for the humanitarian situation of refugees. In 1992, it had assumed the chairmanship of the Multilateral Working Group on Refugees, which, to date, had mobilized over US$ 100 million to improve the living conditions of refugees in the West Bank and Gaza, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria, without prejudice to their future status. In 1996, Canada had led a mission to study the difficult conditions in the Lebanese refugee camps and had made recommendations for improving that situation. In order to implement those recommendations, US$ 17 million had been raised, most of it in the form of additional support for UNRWA. Canada had also led a mission in October to visit five overcrowded, heavily populated refugee camps in the West Bank and Gaza, where and the basic services provided by UNRWA were under enormous strain. It was, therefore, his Government's hope that the international community would bear in mind the vital role played by UNRWA as it prepared for the meeting of donors called for in the Wye River Memorandum.

5. As stated in the report of the Commissioner-General (A/53/13), the financial problems faced by UNRWA had led to a reduction in the quality and quantity of the services which it provided to Palestinian refugees, and the Israeli authorities had imposed restrictions on the freedom of movement of UNRWA staff in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and had imposed permit requirements. In addition, the Palestinian Authority remained delinquent in its reimbursement to UNRWA of value added tax in the amount of US$ 19 million. He therefore called on the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority to do all in their power to enable UNRWA to carry out its humanitarian mandate until a political solution to the refugee issue could be found.

6. Unfortunately, it was the refugees who had been most affected by the UNRWA financial crisis. He therefore urged the international community to assume its fair share of responsibility and to contribute to UNRWA. Canada had contributed Can$ 85 million to UNRWA since the signing of the Oslo Accords in 1993, and in 1998, despite heavy budgetary pressure, it had maintained its contribution of Can$ 10 million. It had also provided additional support to the special appeal for Lebanon and to shelter rehabilitation in the West Bank, Gaza and Jordan and had assisted with the move of UNRWA headquarters from Vienna to Gaza. Canada's total contributions for 1998 had amounted to almost Can$ 12 million, 20 per cent more than its original pledge. In addition to those financial contributions, his Government was seeking to help UNRWA to operate more efficiently and would continue to work with UNRWA and

other donors so that the Agency could fulfil its critical humanitarian mandate.

7. **Mr. Turkoglu** (Turkey) said that although the Wye River Memorandum offered new prospects for peace and stability in the region, the political climate remained extremely unstable. For that reason, the General Assembly should give careful consideration to the situation of UNRWA, the mandate of which complemented the peace process.

8. As stated in the report of the Commissioner-General (A/53/13), UNRWA faced grave problems in fulfilling its mandate because its resources had decreased and the number of refugees for whom it must care had risen. Nevertheless, it had continued to provide basic services to refugees thanks to the dedication of its staff, the sacrifices of host countries and the endeavours of the Palestinian refugees themselves. However, a stronger response to the economic, cultural and social needs of the Palestinian refugees, without losing sight of the main political objectives, would have a stabilizing effect and contribute to the creation of a more peaceful atmosphere. That task, to which the international community had been committed for 50 years, would remain incomplete unless the necessary resources were provided. Diminishing the role of UNRWA could even undermine the results achieved to date.

9. The international community should bear in mind the increased poverty and unemployment among Palestinian refugees and the alarming deterioration of their socio-economic conditions and should provide greater support to UNRWA. As a member of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the country chairing the Working Group on the Financing of UNRWA, Turkey would continue its support for the Agency.

10. **Mr. Tekaya** (Tunisia) said that the plight of the Palestine refugees, who had been expelled from their homes and their homeland, was a humanitarian issue for which the international community must assume responsibility. Until a just, comprehensive and lasting solution was found, one that took the refugees' legitimate rights into account, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions, UNRWA should continue its efforts to alleviate their suffering by providing them with basic social services, education, health and assistance.

11. His Government was grateful to UNRWA for the activities it organized on behalf of the Palestine refugees; those activities were admirable, despite the difficult conditions under which the Agency had to work. As the Commissioner-General had noted in his report (A/53/13), the period 1 July 1997–30 June 1998 had been marked by lack of progress towards peace in the region, and that had contributed to increasing tension and growing frustration and despair among the refugees. In all UNRWA-run camps, the conditions under which the refugees lived continued to be precarious, with rising unemployment, very low income levels, severe wear and tear on infrastructure, continued restrictions on the movement of individuals and the closure of Palestinian areas. Those conditions had had a negative impact on UNRWA's work, especially in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Furthermore, UNRWA had been compelled to adopt austerity measures owing to the financial crisis that it was currently experiencing, and that situation had led to protests by refugees and given rise to the impression that the international community was becoming unwilling to meet its obligations.

12. It was regrettable that, despite the increase in the numbers of the refugees, and hence their growing needs, UNRWA had had to cut back on its services. The result had been further suffering for the refugees and greater uncertainty about their future. His delegation urged the international community, especially the wealthy countries, to increase their contributions to UNRWA so that it could carry out its mandate. His Government had decided to renew its contribution for the current year, persuaded as it was that the Agency should continue to carry out its praiseworthy mission until such time as a comprehensive, lasting solution had been found, one that would allow the refugees to return to their homes and receive compensation. Lastly, he thanked the host countries and donor countries for their assistance to UNRWA.

13. **Mr. Zohar** (Israel) expressed appreciation for the Commissioner-General's constructive comments on the Wye River Memorandum. His delegation agreed that there was no alternative to peace, and it acknowledged the importance of UNRWA's Peace Implementation Programme, which was designed to teach children the values of peace, democracy, tolerance and conflict resolution. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Jerusalem had a similar programme which, with the assistance of peace-loving nations such as Norway, was striving to establish a genuine dialogue of peace at the grass-roots level between Israelis and Palestinians. In Israel, the Arabic language and culture were taught to Jewish children in order to familiarize them with their neighbours.

14. For half a century, the question of the Arab refugees had been annually debated. Israel agreed that it was high time a solution to the problem was found, and had agreed in principle with its neighbours that the question of refugees would be discussed in the context of the Middle East peace process, which was the only appropriate place to examine

it. The Committee should concentrate on the humanitarian aspects, not the political aspects, of the matter.

15. The Arab refugee problem had been created not by Israel but by the refusal of the Arab States to permit the establishment of Israel as a free and democratic nation in the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Jewish people. The war of 1948 had been started by the Arab side, which bore the historical responsibility for the problem of the refugees of Palestine.

16. As a result of the various agreements that had been reached between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, the majority of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including refugees, were currently under the rule of the Palestinian Authority.

17. Until the Committee took those facts into account and analysed the situation in more realistic terms, Israel would be unable to support UNRWA with its vote, although it did acknowledge the Agency's invaluable humanitarian work.

18. In its most recent report, UNRWA had noted occasional restrictions imposed by Israel, and also by the Palestinian Authority, for reasons of security, that had temporarily affected freedom of movement. The Committee could rest assured that Israel was working to reduce tensions in the region, being fully aware that the need for restrictions would thereby be reduced in turn as the peace process made progress. However, acts of terrorism unfortunately still occurred, the most recent having been a bomb in Jerusalem on 6 November. The Secretary-General himself had expressed regret over the incident, which had caused loss of life and further suffering. He thanked the Secretary-General for his humanity, his solidarity with the victims and his constant support for peace. Despite such terrorist outrages, his Government had imposed temporary restrictions only occasionally, as its policy was to seek to facilitate an economic relationship between Israelis and Palestinians coming into Israel to work. Terrorism hurt the Palestinian cause no less than it hurt Israelis, and it was incumbent on both sides to endeavour to prevent acts of terrorism wherever possible.

19. Lastly, as part of the rationalization process within the United Nations, the number of resolutions in connection with the matter at hand might appropriately be reduced to one. Such a single resolution, with the political verbiage and biased comment eliminated, could focus usefully on the key humanitarian issue of the refugees.

20. **Mr. Tanaka** (Japan) said that his country had actively supported international efforts to advance the peace process in the Middle East and that the international community had welcomed the signing of the Wye River Memorandum by the Israeli and Palestinian authorities. His Government hoped that both parties would implement that agreement.

21. UNRWA continued to face a critical financial situation, which had compelled it to reduce basic services to the Palestine refugees. The international community must respond to the Agency's urgent needs by increasing its cooperation. In 1997 Japan's financial contribution had amounted to $12.6 million, including the sums earmarked for specific projects to construct and reconstruct schools and training centres. It had donated an additional $7.3 million for food aid and emergency assistance programmes in Lebanon. It had also dispatched experts to participate in vocational training activities in neighbouring countries and had accepted trainees in vocational training courses in Japan. Japan was determined to continue to provide assistance for the development and stabilization of the Palestinian region.

22. *Mr. Chun Hae-jin (Republic of Korea) took the Chair.*

23. **Mrs. Nguyen Thi Nha** (Viet Nam) said that her delegation commended the Commissioner-General of UNRWA and his staff for the professionalism, skill and dedication with which they had carried out their work and for their comprehensive report (A/53/13), which outlined the various programmes implemented by the Agency and demonstrated the flexibility with which it operated.

24. Her delegation commended UNRWA for the services it provided to 3.5 million Palestine refugees through its programmes, despite the financial constraints, and shared the concern expressed by the Chairman of the Advisory Commission of UNRWA over the Agency's financial situation. In view of the deterioration in the living conditions of the Palestine refugees, contributions to UNRWA must be increased. Her delegation was of the view that only a comprehensive peace settlement would resolve the refugee issue. In the meantime, UNRWA remained a beacon of hope for the refugees.

25. The international community welcomed the recent signing of the Wye River Memorandum and hoped that the parties would fulfil the commitments undertaken and manage to overcome the obstacles that still impeded the final achievement of a lasting peace that would include recognition of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. Her delegation reaffirmed its steadfast support for the just struggle of the Palestinian people and was confident that the Palestine refugees would continue to benefit from international cooperation.

26. **Mr. Al-Otaibi** (Kuwait) thanked the Commissioner-General of UNRWA for his detailed report on the work of

the Agency (A/53/13) and for the efforts made to carry out its important activities despite the financial difficulties it was facing. The international community should provide economic support to UNRWA in order to ensure that the services it provided to the Palestine refugees were not affected.

27. His delegation reiterated the Arab position with regard to international responsibility for the Palestine refugee issue and the need for UNRWA to continue its work, until a solution was achieved in accordance with General Assembly resolution 194 (III). It opposed any reduction in services provided to refugees in the Agency's areas of operation and stressed the need for it to continue to carry out its programmes in its various spheres of activity.

28. Kuwait had provided economic assistance to the Palestine refugees, contributed to infrastructure programmes through the international financial institutions and maintained its annual financial support of $1.5 million in the conviction that the Palestinian cause was just.

29. The suffering of the Palestinian people had increased as a result of Israeli policies in the occupied territories on the pretext of protecting national security and combating terrorism. Those pretexts did not justify border closings, the demolition of houses, the confiscation of land, the establishment of settlements, or detentions, which violated the basic norms of international law and the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention in the occupied territories. His delegation supported the implementation of the United Nations resolutions on the refugees and, in particular, those relating to the principle of land for peace.

30. Israel must comply with the agreements established in order to enable the Palestinian people to enjoy its rights, including the right to establish an independent State on its own land.

31. **Mr. Squadron** (United States of America) reaffirmed his delegation's strong support for UNRWA and acknowledged the significant humanitarian role it played. As the largest donor to UNRWA, the United States had a strong stake in ensuring that the Agency addressed problems in a fair and comprehensive manner and in a way that ensured its future financial stability. His delegation urged UNRWA to continue the dialogue with its major donors in order to formulate a strategic vision for the future that would align its priorities with realistic projections of available resources. In 1998, the United States had contributed $70 million to the Agency's budget and over $1.6 million for specific peace implementation projects. The United States would continue to work closely with other donors and with UNRWA to address the Agency's funding needs; however, the amount of its contribution would depend mainly on how much progress was achieved in developing a strategic vision.

32. He stressed that "political support" was not the same as real support. The Palestinians needed help. There was a framework for political support, namely, the Middle East peace process. In order to support that effort, the General Assembly had a "positive resolution". However, lasting peace in the region stemmed from cooperation among the interested parties. His delegation would support all resolutions relating to the work of UNRWA; however, it would oppose any resolution that might prejudge the outcome of issues that should be resolved by the parties themselves.

33. The Wye River Memorandum, signed by the Israeli and Palestinian authorities, called for a conference at the ministerial level in 1998 in order to seek enhanced donor support for economic development in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. A donor conference would be held in Washington at the end of the month, and an UNRWA pledging conference would also be held soon. It was crucial for the international community to demonstrate its strong support for the Palestinians.

34. True assistance to the Palestinian people took two forms: countries could either contribute to international assistance programmes or provide services and material support in kind. Funds should be channelled either directly to UNRWA, which was operating in the region, or into the economic development of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. Those countries that were unable to make a financial contribution should support the Middle East peace process and the "positive resolution".

35. **Mr. Al-Zayani** (Bahrain) said that the report of the Commissioner-General of the UNRWA was similar to those of previous years, and he thanked the Commissioner-General, the Working Group on the Financing of UNRWA, the Advisory Commission of UNRWA and the Agency's staff for their constant efforts to safeguard the Agency's finances so that it could complete its noble mission.

36. After 50 years, the Palestine refugees were still living in a very difficult situation in a climate of ever-increasing tension. The Agency provided assistance in education, health, social services and employment. The report of the Commissioner-General indicated that the funding shortfall experienced since 1993 had adversely affected the education programmes, which had not been able to cope with the increase in the school-age population. The quality of teaching had deteriorated despite the planning and rationalization methods applied by the Agency. The health programmes had also been affected.

37. Bahrain shared the concern of the rest of the world over the deterioration in the Agency's financial situation and noted that the Agency had had to apply austerity measures because donations had succeeded only in covering the basic budget deficit. He praised the Agency's efforts and expressed the hope that, with contributions from the donor countries, UNRWA would be able to redress its financial situation in order to improve its services and care for the ever-increasing number of refugees.

38. **Mr. Droushiotis** (Cyprus) said that his delegation associated itself with the statement made by the representative of Austria speaking on behalf of the European Union and thanked the Commissioner-General of UNRWA for his report. He also thanked the Agency for its contribution to the improvement of the living conditions of the Palestinian people and to stability in the region, which were essential to the achievement of lasting peace and security in the Middle East.

39. As a neighbouring country which had suffered a similar experience of population displacements and economic calamity, Cyprus understood the importance of alleviating suffering and creating proper conditions for social and economic development, and it was keenly aware of the permanent and inalienable right of people to return to their homes and recover their property.

40. His delegation noted with concern the critical financial situation of UNRWA and its negative impact on the services the Agency provided. He recalled that, in his report on the work of the Organization, the Secretary-General had underlined that the services provided by the Agency had continued to decline ever since budget cutbacks had begun in 1993.

41. The Agency's humanitarian work had suffered not only from the effects of budget restrictions but also as a result of the tense political environment and the continued imposition of security measures in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The Agency's staff was to be commended for the commitment and dedication it had shown despite those problems.

42. In light of those circumstances, his delegation joined in the urgent appeals for increased contributions to UNRWA so that it could continue its work. He welcomed the Secretary-General's visit to the region in the spring of 1998, the interest he had shown in the countries and peoples of the Middle East and his appeal for increased contributions to the Agency.

43. Convinced that one of the fundamental prerequisites for lasting peace and stability was improved standards of living for all the peoples in the region, Cyprus had joined international efforts in support of the economic advancement of the Palestinian people. In that context, apart from increasing its annual contribution to UNRWA, Cyprus had in 1996 developed its own scheme of assistance to the Palestinians which included, *inter alia*, the construction of two medical centres in the West Bank, at a cost of $2.2 million, and a comprehensive programme of technical assistance and training for some 100 Palestinian officials, including follow-up visits by Cypriot experts to the autonomous areas.

44. Cyprus welcomed the signing of the Wye River Memorandum, which would make possible a resumption of the negotiations on permanent status provided for in the Oslo Accords and the implementation of other commitments under the Interim Agreement. He reiterated his delegation's firm commitment to a just and comprehensive settlement in the Middle East, based on United Nations resolutions, and underlined the importance of a sound economy to social and political stability for the Palestinian people, which was crucial for peace. Lastly, he expressed his delegation's strong support for the renewal of the mandate of UNRWA.

45. **Mr. Shen Guofang** (China) thanked the Commissioner- General for his annual report on the work of the Agency and paid a tribute to the staff of UNRWA for the extraordinary efforts it had made to overcome the Agency's problems and to continue to provide valuable assistance to the Palestine refugees.

46. The problem of the Palestine refugees had dragged on for too long and it was to be hoped that both the Palestinians and the Israelis would comply with the agreements they had signed so that the peace process could move forward and the Palestinian people would be able to live in peace and tranquillity as soon as possible.

47. The work of UNRWA, an embodiment of the international determination to resolve the Palestine refugee issue, was of particular significance for the success of the peace process. The Agency's current financial crisis was therefore cause for concern. UNRWA, the donor countries, the host Governments, other United Nations bodies and the international community in general must pool their efforts so that the Agency could overcome its financial problems and continue to play its irreplaceable role. It was also to be hoped that the Agency would continue its efforts to improve its management mechanism in order to provide better services to the refugees.

48. In the past, China had provided all the support it could, both through UNRWA and through bilateral channels. Despite the floods China had suffered in 1998, the

Government had decided to continue its contribution to UNRWA, thus demonstrating its interest in the Palestine refugee issue and its staunch support for UNRWA.

49. **Mr. Suryo-Di-Puro** (Indonesia) expressed his delegation's appreciation to the Commissioner-General of UNRWA for his report and commended the Agency's work on behalf of the 3.5 million Palestine refugees in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic. Ever since its establishment, UNRWA had played a crucial role in promoting social and economic development and reducing political tension throughout the region.

50. The role played by UNRWA was particularly significant at the current critical juncture of the peace process. In that connection, his delegation welcomed the signing of the Wye River Memorandum as a step towards the fulfilment of other obligations and commitments that were essential to peace. It earnestly hoped that that agreement would pave the way for solutions to other substantive issues, so that at last a just and comprehensive resolution of the question of Palestine could be achieved, in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

51. Despite the severe shortage of resources with which UNRWA was currently confronted, the Agency had succeeded in implementing a wide range of projects that were essential to the peace process and to overall stability in the region and thus deserved to be adequately funded.

52. Indonesia had always supported the Palestinian cause. Over the years, it had contributed, insofar as its modest means permitted, to helping the Palestinian people in its struggle for an independent homeland. Donor countries should continue to extend assistance to the Palestine refugees. Economic support for the nascent Palestinian State was essential so that peace and harmony could flourish in the region at last.

53. Indonesia supported the valuable services provided by UNRWA under what were, at times, very difficult circumstances, and hoped that the Agency would be maintained until the Palestinian people regained its sovereign and inalienable rights.

54. *Mr. Macedo (Mexico) resumed the Chair.*

55. **Mr. Jilani** (Palestine), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the Israeli Cabinet had approved the Wye River Memorandum subject to a number of conditions for which there was no provision in the Memorandum and which, indeed, were at variance with some of its terms. Furthermore, the Israeli Cabinet had tried more than once to delay ratification of the Memorandum on a variety of pretexts, heedless of the wishes of the parties themselves. Palestine continued to hope that the agreement would be implemented in full without delay.

56. Concerning the problem of the refugees, Israel had once again presented an erroneous interpretation of history. The problem of the Palestine refugees had arisen as a result of war and massacres of innocent Palestinian civilians. Furthermore, the preambular part of the resolution by which Israel had been admitted to the United Nations referred to resolutions 181 (II) and 194 (III), under which Israel had been required to agree to allow the Palestine refugees to return to their homes. The problem was not only humanitarian in nature, it was also political. There were five million Palestine refugees scattered over the neighbouring countries waiting for their situation to be resolved after 50 years of injustice, 50 years of living outside their land under very difficult conditions.

57. **The Chairman** drew the Committee's attention to draft resolutions A/C.4/53/L.9 and L.10, and announced that Norway and Cyprus wished to become sponsors of draft resolution A/C.4/53/L.10.

58. **Mr. Hansen** (Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East) extended his thanks to all those who had taken part in the discussion and all those who had shown that they understood the complex situation within which UNRWA worked and the problems that the Agency would have to face in the future if it was to maintain the basic support with which it provided the Palestine refugees. Everything that UNRWA had accomplished to date was in danger. The Agency was heavily dependent on the understanding and support of the international community.

59. With respect to the questions put by the representatives of Norway and Bangladesh concerning charges of corruption within UNRWA, the matter in question had arisen when a staff member's contract had not been renewed. As soon as it had been brought to UNRWA's attention, an internal audit had been undertaken, as the charges involved were serious ones. UNRWA had also approached several countries that were renowned for their investigation agencies and had asked them to carry out thorough investigations in order to elucidate the situation. The investigators had reached the conclusion that the charges of corruption were groundless.

60. It was, of course, not out of the question that instances of corruption should occur in such a large organization as UNRWA, which handled large amounts of money and whose staff members were relatively poorly paid. It was essential to be constantly vigilant and to take active steps to detect any problems and to respond firmly. That had always been

and would continue to be the Agency's position, inasmuch as its most valuable asset was the trust of donor countries and its credibility in the eyes of those countries with regard to its management of the resources that were channelled through it to the refugees. UNRWA would do everything in its power to ensure that that asset did not become depreciated.

61. He hoped to see all the members again at the Pledging Conference that was to be held early in December in New York. He hoped that, inspired by the attitude of understanding that had characterized the discussion, they would be prepared to maintain or increase their contributions to UNRWA, so that the Agency could have a budget which all concerned had deemed reasonable, albeit minimal. If so, it would be able to continue to provide its services for another two years, and would not be compelled to reduce its activities or to dash the refugees' hope for a better future.

62. **The Chairman** announced that the Committee had concluded its general discussion of agenda item 83.

Organization of work

63. **The Chairman** suggested, in the light of previous consultations, that the Committee should again follow its traditional procedure of voting on the draft resolutions relating to the two agenda items concerning the Middle East, namely items 83 and 84, at the same meeting, to be held on Thursday, 19 November.

64. *It was so decided.*

65. **The Chairman**, referring to agenda item 84, drew the Committee's attention to the problem of the late submission of documents, especially at times when Conference Services had to deal with a substantial volume of work and as a result, the timely preparation of all language versions was not feasible. He therefore suggested that the Committee should follow an unusual and, it was to be hoped, exceptional procedure that would enable it to consider the agenda item in question and adopt the corresponding resolutions in order to conclude its work within the time-frame allocated by the General Assembly. That procedure would consist in considering the unpublished versions of documents in English only. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to approve that course of action.

66. *It was so decided.*

The meeting rose at 4.45 p.m.